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ABSTRACT

A discussion of foreign language classroom communication focuses on the ratio of teacher talk to student talk and its contribution to second language learning. It begins with the assumption that if students are to develop communicative competence in the target language, they must be allowed and encouraged to talk progressively more while the teacher talks progressively less. Three issues are addressed: (1) the kind of student talk that should be increased in the foreign language classroom; (2) the conditions teachers must create in the classroom so that students will want and need to talk more; and (3) the specific activities effective in increasing the amount and variety of student talk. Based on those issues, a rationale and means for progressively increasing the percentage of student talk while decreasing that of teacher talk are proposed. Instructional strategies suggested for encouraging student talk include providing a content-rich environment, helping students to understand, inviting students to participate, using nonverbal cues, listening for meaning, not form, and providing activities that engage the students. A distinction is made between "speaking" and "talking," the latter defined as a more meaningful communicative activity. Specific bridging activities, or class activities designed to move students from "speaking" practice to "talking" practice, and talking tasks are outlined. (MSE)

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MASTER LECTURE SERIES

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Increasing the Ratio of Student Talk to Teacher Talk

Barbara H. Wing

March 1982

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ACTFL MASTER LECTURE SERIES

Increasing the Ratio of Student Talk to Teacher Talk

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March 1982

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FOREWARD

For the past several years, prominent members of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) have been presenting lectures to the faculty and staff of the Defense Language Institute, Foreign Language Center. The purpose of these lectures has been to discuss recent trends and developments in foreign language learning and teaching as well as to strengthen then professional contacts between DLIFLC and ACTFL.

The ACTFL Master Lecture, "Increasing the Ratio of Student Talk to Teacher Talk," by Dr. Barbara H. Wing, was presented at the DLIFLC in March 1982. This paper is published to make the content of the lecture fully accessible to the DLIFLC professionals.

The ideas and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent an official position of the DLIFLC nor of any other element of the United States Department of Defense.

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Introduction

Talking is a very easy thing for adults to do in their native language. It is a very difficult thing to do when adults are learning a foreign language, especially when the language is being learned in a classroom far removed from the target culture.

I have been asked to outline for you current pedagogical and research information about talk in the foreign language classroom. The specific focus of my remarks is: increasing the ratio of student talk to teacher talk in foreign language classes. We will look at why and how to get students to talk more while we, their teachers, talk less.

As every foreign language teacher knows, it is much easier to talk than it is to make students talk. In many classrooms, teachers do most of the talking. Students expect teachers to talk and teachers like to talk. By talking, teachers can provide a model of the target language, convey information, and control what happens in the classroom. However, if students are to realize the contemporary objective of developing communicative competence in the target language, they must be allowed, and encouraged, to talk progressively more while the teacher talks progressively less.

As a framework for addressing the problem of increasing the ratio of student talk to teacher talk, we will examine three important questions. They are:

(1) What is the kind of student talk that should be increased in the foreign language classroom?

(2) What conditions must teachers create in the classroom so that students will want to and need to talk more?

(3) What specific activities are effective in increasing the amount and variety of student talk?

Answers to these questions will suggest a rationale and means for progessively increasing the percentage of student talk while, at the same time, decreasing the amount of teacher talk.

1. What is the kind of student talk that should be increased in the classroom?

In the past twenty years, researchers in education, linguistics, and logic have been listening closely to what is said in the classroom and how it is said. Classroom communication, in the form of verbal exchanges between teachers and students, has been analyzed with regard to the purposes for which language is used (Bellack, et al., 1966; Flanders, 1970; Hough & Duncan, 1970). In the foreign language classroom, in particular, talk has been analyzed to determine the specific characteristics of student and teacher talk, given the bilingual nature of instruction (Fanselow, 1977; Jarvis, 1968; Moskowitz, 1970). My own research has focused on teacher verbal behaviors that directly relate to the two commonly accepted goals of foreign language instruction: the development of linguistic competence and the development of communicative competence (Wing, 1980). The definition and significance of these competencies has important implications for the discussion of the kind of student talk that should be increased in the classroom.

The ability to use a foreign language effectively is the result of the interaction of the speaker's linguistic and communicative competence. By definition, linguistic competence is the ability to arrange the sounds, words and structure of a language into gramatically correct sentences

(Widdowson, 1978). Communicative competence, on the other hand, is the ability to say something meaningful and appropriate in specific situations (Hymes, 1979; Savignon, 1972). To be successful, the foreign language learner must develop both linguistic and communicative competence.

For a long time, foreign language teaching in the United States, as well as in other countries, emphasized the development of linguistic competence. This approach was compatible with the goals of teaching students to read and develop analytical skills. When communication became the goal of language teaching, due in part, to the practical necessity of teaching military personnel to use the target language for strategic purposes, new techniques were pioneered at the Defense Language Institute. Dialogue memorization and oral practice drills gave students extensive practice in forming the sounds, words and patterns of the target language. The amount of target language used in the classroom increased significantly as students memorized and mimicked. Teachers and researchers, however, began to ask some important questions, such as: Is all the speaking that is done in dialogues and practice drills really talking? Are students really saying anything when they are speaking? Is communicative competence developing, of its own accord, as the learner practices the sounds, forms and patterns of the target language?

In the past decade, we have realized that, even though students might be <u>speaking</u> more, they aren't <u>saying</u> very much. It has become apparent that large doses of dialogue and pattern practice have proved only partially effective in preparing students to talk about what they want to and need to say. To be more fully effective, teachers and applied linguists have needed a new perspective with regard to classroom talk.

This perspective would recognize the communicative as well as linguistic goals of contemporary foreign language teaching and would shape the techniques and materials to realize the goals.

A perspective that shows promise for teachers and researchers alike is one proposed by Widdowson, an applied linguist working in the area of teaching English as a Second Language. In Teaching Language as Communication, Widdowson (1978) examines the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. These skills have been considered the building blocks of foreign language teaching for the past thirty years. Widdowson, however, suggests that this model (Figure 1), which categorizes speaking and writing as productive skills and listening and reading as passive skills, is appropriate only if we are referring to linguistic competence, or in his terms, language usage.

Figure 1

Language Usage Model[1]

The Four Skills	
Productive/Active	Receptive/Passive
speaking	listening
writing	reading

To describe language use in real situations, or communicative competence, Widdowson proposes a new model. The oral components of this model are reproduced in Figure 2.

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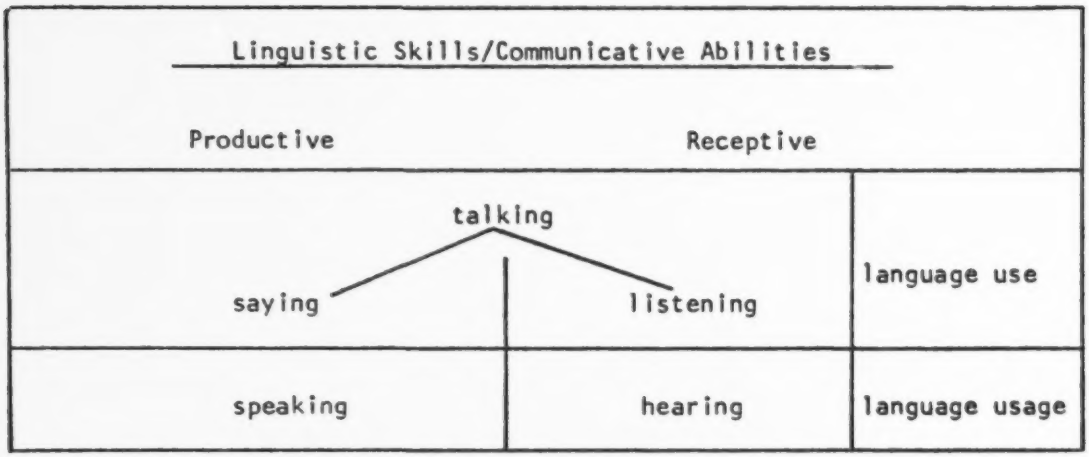
[1]Woddowson, H. G. Teaching Language as Communication. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978, p. 60.

Figure 2

Communicative Approach Model[2]



In the new model, the Communicative Approach Model, Widdowson proposes that talking is a communicative act that involves interacting verbally with other people. This interaction can be compared to a game of ball in which one person throws the ball to another. The receiver catches the ball and throws it back, or drops it, or keeps it, or throws it to someone else. The receiver has several options, but in conversation, as in a game of ball, the game is most successful when the players keep the ball, i.e., the message, moving.

In Widdowson's model, as seen in Figure 2, there are two levels of oral activity. The lower level is the usage level, or the linguistic competence level. The higher level is the use level, or the communicative competence level. In addition, there is a productive and receptive dimension of each level. In the lower level, the usage level, there are two skills: hearing and speaking. Hearing, a receptive skill, involves the

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[2] Ibid.

reception of sounds and grammatical patterns as linguistic signals. It is what happens in foreign language classes when students hear the teacher model sentences and repeat their answers. Speaking, the productive usage counterpart of hearing, is the oral production of correct sounds and grammatical patterns. It is what happens in foreign language classes when dialogues and oral drills are spoken in practice and from memory. Together, hearing and speaking are the skills of language usage or linguistic competence.

On the higher level, the use or communicative competence level, there are also two skills: listening and saying. Listening describes receiving an oral message in a specific situation. Saying describes producing a real message in a specific situation. Together, listening and saying make up talking. Listening and saying are the skills of language use or communicative competence. Together they constitute the communicative act called talking.

To review Widdowson's model: foreign language teaching is concerned with developing productive and receptive skills of linguistic competence and of communicative competence. The ultimate objective is to teach students to talk. To talk means to listen and say in a communicative interaction with other people. In order to listen and say, students must know how to hear and speak. To hear and to speak is to recognize and produce the sounds and grammatical patterns of the target language. Hearing and speaking are the foundations of listening and saying. Listening and saying are the components of talk.

Talk, then, is a communicative activity that is concerned with the sending and receiving of meaningful messages. Speaking, on the other hand, is a more limited activity that is concerned with the production of

linguistically correct sentences. Talking, by definition, includes speaking. Speaking, however, does not necessarily mean talking.

Given the objective of developing communicative competence and the new perspective on classroom talk proposed by Widdowson, the answer to the question of what kind of student talk should be increased in the foreign language classroom becomes clear. We need to increase talk in the sense of listening and saying: talk in the sense of sending and receiving messages that have real significance for the students. Talk that is meaningful and appropriate to specific situations. Talk that is initiated and maintained by the students themselves with progressively less assistance and less interference by the teacher. Talk in which the students take the responsibility for asking questions, providing answers, and reacting to what other students have said. Talk that makes use of practice in hearing and speaking but that goes beyond hearing and speaking because it is concerned with the message, not the form, of what is being communicated.

This kind of talk is natural for the teacher, especially the teacher who is a native speaker of the target language. It is not natural for the student, even the student who has diligently practiced speaking the target language by memorizing dialogues and doing oral drills with a high degree of accuracy. Knowing how to speak, as Widdowson's model demonstrates, does not mean knowing how to talk. Talking, like speaking, requires practice. However, while a great deal of <u>speaking</u> practice generally occurs in the foreign language classroom, considerably less <u>talking</u> practice occurs.

The relatively low percentage of real student talk in the target language is partially explained by the fact that the conditions for encouraging talk are different from those for directing speaking practice.

Most foreign language teacher training courses prepare teachers to model the target language, lead oral practice sessions and correct student errors. Often these courses do not prepare teachers to create the conditions for encouraging talk. The current emphasis on developing communicative competence requires that teachers be able to create these conditions.

2. What conditions must be created in the classroom so that students will want to and need to talk?

There are three types of conditions that are essential to the encouragement of student talk in the foreign language classroom. They are: psychological environment, physical arrangements, and instructional strategies. Each plays a vital role in conveying the message to students that real talking is an integral part of their foreign language learning experience.

Because of the personal nature of talking, the psychological environment in the classroom is extremely important. This environment is shaped by student expectations of what is appropriate in the classroom and by the signals, especially the non-verbal signals, that teachers convey to students regarding what is expected to happen.

One of the expectations that students have about classroom talk is that the teacher will do most of the talking while they will listen. Research has shown that in the typical classroom, the teacher does indeed talk from two-thirds to three-quarters of the time (Flanders, in Dunkin & Biddle, 1974, p. 137). Other expectations are that the teacher will explain the material, ask questions about it, correct the students' answers and either praise or criticize the students (Bellack, et al., 1966).

Again, research has shown that these expectations are fulfilled in the foreign language classroom (Wing, 1980). These expectations, especially those in which the teacher is perceived to be the modeler of the target language, practice master, and evaluator of student responses, aptly describe what happens when speaking is practiced in the foreign language classroom. Teachers model sentences, cue responses, and reinforce student speech by repeating what students have said. These expectations do not, however, fit the situation teachers must create when talking is practiced in the classroom.

When we practice talking, we are trying to recreate or simulate the conditions that exist in natural conversation outside of the classroom. In natural conversations, role expectations are not clearly differentiated as in the classroom. Participants in a conversation give information, ask questions and react to what other people say. To simulate or recreate this situation, students must change their expectations and also their behavior. They must expect to have to listen to each other and not just to the teacher. They must expect to talk to each other and not just answer the teacher. They must expect to initiate as well as respond. These are new expectations for students. It takes time and structuring of the classroom activities to translate these expectations into communicative activity. The effort is vital, since, in doing so, students are learning to rely on themselves both linguistically and communicatively. They are learning to be communicatively competent and communicatively confident. Both capabilities are essential to the development of the ability to talk in the target language.

These new expectations can be explained to students. Often they must be explained several times. These expectations, however, have to be supported by the teacher's attitudes and non-verbal actions that tell students we really mean what we are saying.

The specific attitudes and non-verbal behaviors that teachers must project are those associated with a classroom atmosphere in which students feel reasonably comfortable about themselves, their relationships with each other and with the teacher. This kind of atmosphere is fundamental if students are to feel free to talk. We, as teachers, know, from our experiences in learning a second language, that the degree to which we feel comfortable in a situation influences our ability to use the target language. Our linguistic and communicative competence are enhanced by a positive psychological environment. So also is our communicative confidence.

To boost our students' communicative confidence, we must send students positive signals. These signals must tell students that we care about them as individuals, that we are genuinely interested in what they are saying, and that we really want them to succeed in talking to each other.

A word of warning is necessary, however, regarding expectations and attitudes. As one applied linguist has pointed out: "If we are to raise our expectations for oral competency in communication, we must lower our expectations for structural accuracy" (Terrill, 1977, p. 326). We will have to tolerate gaps in linguistic competency as students grapple with the problems of real communication. We must also realize that talking takes more time than speaking. It is characterized by false starts, errors, revisions, and periods of silence, even in the native language.

Furthermore, students who know what they want to say in the native language but cannot express their thoughts in the target language become frustrated very easily. It is especially difficult for students who, in their native language, may be listeners rather than talkers. They are not normally communicative and yet we expect them to be so in the foreign language classroom.

The psychological environment we create must tell students, by what we do as well as by what we say, that the message they are trying to convey is the important thing in talking practice.

A second condition for the encouragement of more student talk is the physical arrangement of the classroom. In the traditional classroom, the teacher occupies the central position in front of rows of students. This arrangement focuses attention on the teacher as giver of information, asker of questions, and evaluator of student responses. It encourages students to listen to and say things to the teacher only, not to the other students.

If students are to talk more, they must not only communicate with the teacher, but with each other. To do so effectively, they must be able to see facial expressions and body movements as well as hear what is being said. Appropriate seating arrangements include a circle or open horseshoe, with the teacher <u>not</u> at the focal point, for large group activities, and pairs or small groups for other activities. These physical arrangements convey the non-verbal message that, in this foreign language class, students talk to each other.

The third and final condition is the instructional strategies employed by the teacher (Figure 3). These strategies carry out the expectations of the psychological environment in the context of the physical arrangements described above.

Figure 3

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES
for
ENCOURAGING STUDENT TALK

1. Provide a "content-rich" environment by

   - using the target language for all talk
   - talking about things that are significant to the students
   - relating topics of class lessons to the students' lives and contemporary issues

2. Help students to understand by

   - using shorter sentences and simpler sentence constructions
   - speaking more slowly and pausing between utterances to allow for processing of the message
   - repeating, expanding and rephrasing what you say

3. Invite students to participate by

   - giving frequent instructions
   - acknowledging their verbal and non-verbal activity
   - making corrections regarding the "truth value" of what they say
   - requesting information only they can provide

4. Use non-verbal cues, such as

   - gestures and pantomime
   - visuals
   - realia

5. Listen for meaning, not form, and

   - let students finish talking without interrupting them
   - give students time to rephrase and self-correct
   - correct only the errors that interfere with meaning

6. Provide activities that engage students by

   - requiring them to discover new information and use it meaningfully
   - make them complete real tasks through communicating with each other
   - placing them in a situation where interaction and cooperation is the key to success

The instructional strategies are behaviors that teachers use to stimulate students to talk. They are the ways in which teachers use their own talk, actions, and materials to make students want to and need to talk. Some of the strategies are based on research in first and second language acuqisition while others represent contemporary pedagogical practice.

As seen in Figure 3, the first strategy is to provide a "content-rich" environment which the teacher uses the target language to talk about things that are meaningful to the students. This talk may concern a specific subject matter, thus diverting attention away from the study of the linguistic elements of the language toward the learning of content by means of the target language. The talk may relate to shared or individual experiences with students contributing information that is not known to other members of the group. The critical element is that students realize that the teacher communicates important and interesting information via the target and not the native language. Students learn quickly not to pay attention to the target language if their teacher resorts to the native language for the "important" messages in the classroom.

The second strategy is to help students to understand the target language as a basis for producing it themselves. Evidence from studies of language acquisition supports the notion that understanding precedes production (Postovsky, 1974). By making some of the linguistic adjustments in "input" (the language that the learner hears) that parents and caretakers typically make when speaking to young children, foreign language teachers may enhance understanding (Krashen, 1978). These structural modifications include: using shorter sentences and simpler sentence constructions; speaking more slowly and pausing between utterances

to allow for processing of the message; and repeating, expanding and rephrasing what has been said. While native speakers often make these adjustments automatically when speaking to foreigners whom they think will not understand normal speech, they may avoid using these behaviors in the classroom.

The third strategy is to invite students to participate, both verbally and non-verbally, by making some of the functional adjustments in input that parents and caretakers make when talking to young children (Ellis, 1981). These communicative modifications include using the target language to give frequent instructions, to acknowledge student behaviors, to make corrections regarding the "truth value" of the student's message, and to request information, especially of the type that is known only to the student.

The use of non-verbal cues is a fourth strategy for encouraging student talk and minimizing teacher talk. The use of gestures and pantomime; visuals such as drawings, photographs, slides, and the like; and realia reduces considerably the amount of teacher talk. In addition, it reinforces the connection between the object/action and the words that describe it without recourse to the native language.

The fifth strategy is to listen for meaning, not form, and to respond appropriately by reacting to the message that the student is trying to convey rather than to the grammatical form of the utterance. This kind of listening is difficult for teachers whose own learning and subsequent teaching emphasized the development of linguistic competence. Listening for meaning requires that teachers let students finish talking without interrupting with corrections for structural accuracy, allowing students

time to rephrase and self-correct, and correcting only errors that obscure the truth value of the utterance. Typical teacher behaviors include agreeing or disagreeing with the content of the message, requesting clarification of the message, and expanding the message. If errors in form are too important to overlook, the student's utterance can be restated correctly with a request for confirmation to determine if what the student meant had been properly understood. A review of frequent and/or important errors can be discussed at the end of the communicative activity.

The final strategy is to provide activities that will engage students in meaningful talk among themselves and with the teacher. These activities require students to discover new information and use it meaningfully as they complete real tasks through communicating with each other. In these task-centered activities, student-to-student interaction and cooperation is the key to success.

Once the conditions for encouraging talk have been established in the classroom, the final component must be developed and implemented. This component is the task-centered activities that students engage in to practice talk in the classroom.

3. <u>What are some specific activities that are effective in increasing the amount and variety of student talk?</u>

It is not enough to tell students to talk in the foreign language classroom. Nor is it enough for teachers to talk to students about meaningful things, though meaningful teacher talk is important in the development of student fluency and confidence. Teachers must develop tasks that require the use of the target language but that do not focus solely

on language usage. These tasks focus on the exchange of ideas, opinions, desires, and feelings. They involve discussion, information getting and problem solving.

Six sample task-centered activities are outlined in the following pages. They are designed for pairs or groups of students working together. Some involve role-playing and/or simulation since, in essence, we are trying to create situations in the classroom that reflect natural uses of talk outside of the classroom. Some of the activities are competitive. All require cooperation and interaction, the essential components of real communication. In all of the activities, adaptations for linguistic structure and communicative content can be made by the teacher to facilitate use with existing syllabi.

The sample activities are divided into two groups called Bridging Activities and Talking Tasks. Bridging Activities are designed to help students move from <u>speaking</u> practice, as defined earlier, to <u>talking</u> practice. This transition is not an automatic one, as we have often discovered when we try to engage students in free conversation. The step from linguistic practice drills to self-initiated communicative interaction is a giant one for many students. Thus, these Bridging Activities combine the relatively strict structure of speaking practice with the freer choices available in real talk.

Bridging Activities

DIALOG GAME*

Objective: To produce a dialog based on suggested alternatives.

Players: 2

Materials: 1 page handout. Script alternatives for Players A and B on opposite sides of page. (See example below)

Procedure:
1. Each player reads the background material that sets the scene.
2. Player A reads the opening statement from his/her side of the handout.
3. Player B listens and selects the alternative that is most appropriate. (All alternatives are linguistically correct but do not fit the communicative setting.)
4. Player A listens and responds with an appropriate alternative.
5. Players alternate until they finish the game.
6. One play provides a summary by answering one or two questions about the conversation.

Adaptation:
1. Level of difficulty
   a. Beginner: Exact wording of alternatives is given.
   b. Intermediate: Indirect wording of alternatives.
   c. Advanced: Alternatives are cued.

2. Dimensions of communicative intent in alternatives; Selections must be appropriate with respect to:
   a. Situation
   b. Purpose
   c. Notion
   d. Style

   > Used singly or in combination

Example:

Player A	Player B
1. -"Could I please speak to Harry?"	1. -"Oh, hi Harry." -"I'm sorry but Harry's not here."
2. -"That's okay. Don't feel bad about it." -"Could you tell me when he'll be back?"	2. -"He'll be back at 10. Could I take a message?" -Yes, I can." (give no information)
3. -"Yes. Will you tell him David called, please?" -"Okay, if you want."	WHO CALLED?_____ WHOM DID HE WANT TO TALK TO?_____

*Margot C. Kimball and Adrian S. Palmer. "The Dialog Game: A Prototypical Activity for Providing Proper Intake in Formal Instruction." TESOL Quarterly 12(1978):17-29.

Bridging Activities

STUDENT TEACHERS*

Objective: To discuss, under the leadership of a student, a visual.

Players: Student teacher and students (may be whole-class or group activity)

Materials: A visual, reproduced on handout for students and transparency for projection, related to dialogue and/or vocabulary being studied.

Procedure:

1. One student is designated student-teacher.
2. All students prepare at least 6 questions and an appropriate answer for each about the visual.
3. The student-teacher also prepares at least 6 false statements about the visual and 2 questions that go beyond the surface content. For example: "What is X thinking here?" or "Why is X doing this?" These 2 questions are written on a transparency.
4. Before class, the teacher checks the accuracy of the student-teacher's statements and questions.
5. Student-teacher says false statements to class while all look at transparency.
6. Students correct false statements.
7. Student-teacher asks prepared factual questions.
8. Students answer.
9. Student-teacher projects 2 conjectural questions.
10. In groups of 2 or 3, students discuss possible answers.
11. Groups present possible answer and class decides which is most plausible answer.

*adapted from: T.P.Feeny. "The Student as Teacher Promoting Communication Skills Through the Use of Illustrations." Foreign Language Annals 14(1981):181-183.

Bridging Activities

INTERVIEW AND CONVERSATION CARDS*

Objective: To find out information about personal and situation-related topics.

Players: 3

Materials: A set of 3 index cards, containing questions related to a specific topic, for each group of 3 students. The questions on each of the 3 cards are different but similar in content topic and/or linguistic structure.

Procedure:

1. Student A asks Student B the first question on his/her card.
2. Student B answers the question.
3. Student C listens and gives assistance, if necessary, or comments on the answer of B.
4. Students take turns asking, answering and commenting on responses.

Adaptations:

1. Level of difficulty
   a. Beginners: Card provides exact wording of question: "What's your name?"
   b. Intermediate: Card provides indirect question: "Ask B what his/her name is."
   c. Advanced: Card provides cue: "Name."

2. Content
   a. Topical questions
   b. Personalized questions
   c. Linguistic structure
      Example: "What do you like ..."
   d. Combination a or b/c

Example:

1. Conversation card: 5-10 questions
   1. When are you happy?
   2. When are you tired?
   3. When are you irritated?
   4. When are you sad?
   5. When are you full of energy?

2. Interview card: 5-10 questions
   1. What's your name?
   2. Where do you live?
   3. Where are you from?
   4. How long have you been in the service?

*adapted from Thérèse M. Bonin and Diane W. Birckbichler. "Real Communication Through Interview and Conversation Cards." The Modern Language Journal LIX(1975):22-25.

The second group of sample activities are Talking Tasks. These tasks place students in situations in which information must be obtained, ideas discussed or problems solved. Here students have more freedom to express their own ideas and feelings. Depending upon the level of competence, they also have more latitude in the manner in which they will express these ideas and feelings. As in all communicative activities, the primary emphasis is using the target language to complete the task.

Talking Tasks

WHAT'S MISSING?*

Objective: To complete a message in which several words are missing.

Players: Individuals, then pairs, then groups of 4.

Materials: A written message in which several words have been omitted, presumably because they were illegible or the original was torn, stained or suffered some other damage.

Procedure:

1. Individuals are given a limited amount of time to read the message and supply the appropriate words.
2. Students meet in pairs to compare their versions and attempt to complete the message.
3. Two pairs combine to make a group of four that compares and discusses their versions.
4. Each group presents their final version to the entire class, with discussion led by the presenters from each group. Several versions may be possible.

Adaptation:

1. Level of difficulty and type of missing elements
   a. Beginner: nouns, personal pronouns, adjectives, present tense verb forms.
   b. Intermediate: above plus more verb tenses, adverbs, prepositions.
   c. Advanced: above plus conjunctions, relative pronouns, subjunctive.

2. Content
   a. Field-oriented situations and tactical vocabulary
   b. Messages for groups can be different, but related to reveal several aspects of a situation.

3. Procedure: groups can compete to create best message in given time limit.

Example:

> The Vietnamese-backed __(government)__ in Phnom Penh has accused Thailand of firing __(shells)__ containing "poisonous __(chemicals)__" into Cambodia, the Hanoi __(radio)__ reported today. Thailand denied the __(report)__.**

*adapted from Richard Allwright. "Language Learning through Communicative Practice," 167-182 in C.J. Brumfit and K. Johnson, eds., The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979.

**The New York Times, Sunday, February 21, 1982,

Talking Tasks

FIND OUT ...

Objective: To obtain unknown information by asking questions.

Players: 4, in pairs of 2 interviewers and 2 responders.

Materials:
1 set of cue cards for interviewers with questions or cues for questions.
1 set of cue cards for responders with bits of information arranged in different order from that on interviewers cards

Procedures:

1. Each pair, interviewers and responders, talk separately about the information on the cue cards. Interviewers prepare questions and responders discuss the information they have been given.

2. The two pairs meet and interviewers ask questions which responders answer. One interviewer takes notes.

3. Both pairs may confer separately during the interview.

4. Interviewers present oral report of information they obtained to other groups.

5. Subjects verify information

Adaptation:

1. Level of difficulty:
   a. Beginner: Cue cards provide exact wording.
   b. Intermediate: Cue cards provide indirect wording.
   c. Advanced: Cue cards provide cue only.

2. Amount of structure: Interviewers can be given problem to solve by asking questions. Responders can be given information about their identity and recent activity.

3. Role playing: Each pair is given identity with instructions on how much/what kind of information to obtain or reveal.

TELL AND SHOW*

Objective: To complete a task by following directions given orally.

Players: 3 people: 2 players and 1 timekeeper

Materials: A table with a partition so that players cannot see each other's "equipment"
"Equipment": Toy tanks, soldiers, houses, trees, etc.
Watch for timekeeper

Procedure:

1. Players sit on opposite sides of the partition with a set of "equipment."
2. Player A arranges "equipment" in a certain order.
3. Player A describes to Player the arrangement of "equipment."
4. Player B arranges his/her "equipment" as instructed.
   . Questions and answers may be exchanged to clarify.
5. Timekeeper calls time, as prearranged, and lifts partition to compare placement of "equipment."

Adptation:

1. Game can be limited to the giving of instructions by Player A with no questions from Player B. In this case, the time limit is very short (30 seconds is suggested) to make players communicate as rapidly and as efficiently as possible.

2. Game can make use of maps with Player A describing location and Player B drawing map or locating sites on prepared map.

3. Game can involve putting together a piece of equipment with Player A giving instructions, Player B assembling an object.

*Adapted from Richard Allwright. "Language Learning through Communication Practice," 167-182 in C.J. Brumfit and K. Johnson, eds., The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979.

These task-centered activities require that students learn new behaviors in the foreign language classroom. Teachers, also, must learn new behaviors. Once an activity has been explained, teachers must stand back and let students work out the talking tasks themselves. The traditionally teacher-centered classroom becomes a group-centered classroom in which students must depend upon each other as they fulfill the requirements of the talking task. The teacher, in turn, circulates from group to group, listening, taking notes for review at a later time, and encouraging groups to complete the task. The teacher becomes the listener and the students emerge as the talkers.

Conclusion

The commitment to developing communicative competence in the foreign language classroom has required a reexamination of the conditions and techniques for teaching the target language. In this reexamination, the ratio of student talk to teacher talk has emerged as an important part of the realization of communicative goals. The progressive increase in the amount and quality of student talk, defined in terms of listening and saying, is seen as necessary to the attainment of these goals. An understanding of the nature of talk in the classroom, the conditions for encouraging student talk, and the task-centered activities in which real talk takes place, will equip teachers to change the ratio of student talk to teacher talk in their classrooms. The next step is for teachers to transfer this understanding to the classroom. As we create the conditions and implement the techniques designed to increase student talk, we convey the message to students that the goal of communicative competence is a valid and attainable one.

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